

9 July 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Items During Your Absence

1. Regarding this week's [ ] debate, attached are copies of the following (previously passed to you by cable):

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a. 2 July letter from Stennis to Laird requesting an explanation of allegations that Laird had changed his tune on the first strike problem before the Foreign Relations Committee, and that you do not support his assessment of Soviet capabilities and intentions. (Tab A)

b. 3 July letter from Stennis to Laird requesting Laird's definition and evaluation of the ICBM threat, and asking whether the Agency, and you personally, concur in Laird's definition. (Tab B)

c. 3 July letter from Stennis to you asking whether you agree with Laird's response to the above. (Tab C)

Also attached are copies of:

d. 8 July classified and unclassified letters from Laird to Stennis, which were coordinated with the Agency. (Tabs D and E)

e. 8 July letter from General Cushman to Stennis stating that you have no disagreement with Laird's 8 July letter re Soviet and ChiCom strategic capabilities. (Tab F)

[ ]

Copy 1 of 5

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Also in preparation for the Safeguard debate and in response to Stennis' request, on 7 July we briefed the Committee staff on Soviet tactical air.

2. Re your 23 June appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Bruce Clarke has gone over the transcript and made the necessary deletions of your testimony and other sensitive passages and is reasonably satisfied with the results. All references to budgets of the intelligence community about which we exchanged cables have been deleted.

Incidentally, on 1 July Laird wrote Fulbright saying the deletion of your testimony from the public version created obstacles to a balanced understanding of what had transpired, explaining Laird's own position regarding the "first strike" bit, and asking that his letter be made a part of the published record. (Tab G) Initially at least, Fulbright did not accede to this request, which I understand was received by the Committee with some irritation. (Defense does not yet know of this irritation and we are under injunctions from the Committee not to tell them.) However, Laird included a copy of this 1 July letter to Fulbright, with which our own experts found some disagreement, as an attachment to his above-mentioned 8 July response to Stennis. We do not know at this point whether Stennis will make this letter public.

3. On 1 July we received a letter from Symington (as Chairman of the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Foreign Relations Committee) asking for details about our

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on this and sees no major problems. However, Symington is levying a similar requirement on Defense and I gather they will have some problems with it.

4. On 1 July we got a request from Representative Robert Leggett (D., Calif.), a member of House Armed Services Committee, for a briefing on the SS-9. Rivers took us off the hook by agreeing that we need not brief individual members, but says he wants us to appear at an early session of the full Armed Services Committee.

5. On 8 July Ervin's girl, Marcia MacNaughton, called to say the Senator had reluctantly agreed to hear us in executive session on 22 or 23 July. We don't know what brought this on--we have been pressing McClellan, Bayh and others on the matter and maybe they turned the trick. But even though we will now have a chance to state our case, McClellan says he thinks it is still quite important that the White House be heard from if the problem is as serious as we claim.

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TO	NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE	INITIALS
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ACTION		DIRECT REPLY	PREPARE REPLY
APPROVAL		DISPATCH	RECOMMENDATION
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Remarks:			
<p>As you know, the Director expressed his pleasure and complete satisfaction with the black book prepared for the purpose of acquainting him with the significant happenings during his recent absence from Headquarters.</p> <p>I am returning your contribution. I think we can assume that the Director will expect this to be SOP during any future absences, and I suggest that you be prepared to make your input routinely and without further request.</p>			
LKW			
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FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.			DATE
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WILLIAM THOMPSON, D.C.  
JOHN C. TOWNE, TEX.  
FRANK H. DOMINICK, COLO.  
GEORGE MURPHY, CALIF.  
EDWARD W. OROCKE, MASS.  
SARLY GOLDWATER, ARIZ.  
RICHARD S. SCHWENKER, PA.

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T. EDWARD BRASWELL, JR., CHIEF OF STAFF  
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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

July 3, 1969

Honorable Melvin R. Laird  
Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In preparation for Senate debate on the Defense Department Authorization bill which will include authorization of funds for the Anti-ballistic Missile System, it is important that I know the assessment of the Intercontinental ballistic missile threat and the degree of agreement, or disagreement within the intelligence community.

Therefore, I would appreciate your immediately providing me with the following:

- (a) Your definition and evaluation of the ICBM threat facing the United States from any and all nations.
- (b) Whether your definition and evaluation is concurred in by the Central Intelligence Agency, particularly Mr. Richard Helms, Director, and if there is disagreement, to what extent and in what regard.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

John Stennis  
Chairman  
Senate Armed Services Committee

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JOHN C. STENNIS, MISS.  
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M. JACKSON, WASH.  
J. ERVIN, JR., N.C.  
J. W. CANNON, NEV.  
STEPHEN M. YOUNG, OHIO  
DANIEL K. INOUE, HAWAII  
THOMAS J. MCINTYRE, N.H.  
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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

T. EDWARD BRASWELL, JR., CHIEF OF STAFF  
CHARLES B. KIRBOW, CHIEF CLERK

July 3, 1969

Mr. Richard Helms  
Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Mr. Helms:

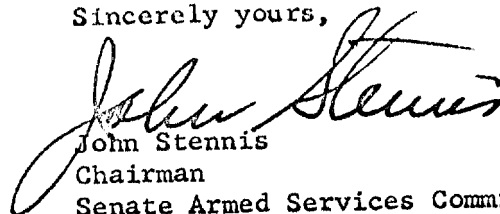
The enclosed letter to Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird is self-explanatory.

I emphasize the necessity of having for the debate on the Defense Authorization bill the assessment of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile threat and whether or not there is disagreement within the intelligence community, particularly, as between the Department of Defense and the C.I.A.

Therefore, I would greatly appreciate if you would respond appropriately after consultation with Secretary Laird indicating your agreement or disagreement with any aspects of his response.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

  
John Stennis  
Chairman

Senate Armed Services Committee

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

8 July 1969

Honorable John C. Stennis  
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to respond to your letters of July 2nd and July 3rd. In your letter of the 2nd, you refer to certain newspaper accounts quoting members of the Foreign Relations Committee to the effect that I had changed my position concerning a potential first strike threat from the Soviet Union during the period of the mid-1970s. Let me first state categorically that my position on this matter has not changed. As a matter of fact, my concern about the Soviet threat to our deterrent has been stated and restated before your Committee and every Committee of the Congress before which I have addressed this issue since assuming office on January 20th. In a letter to the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee dated July 1, I addressed this question and restated once again the essentials of my position concerning this matter. I enclose a copy of my letter to the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee for your information.

In your letter of July 3rd, you asked for my definition and evaluation of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Threat facing the United States from any and all nations.

Since January 1969, there have been several new developments in the Soviet Strategic Forces, all tending to confirm the statements I made in my first appearance before your Committee concerning the threat to the national security of the U. S. in the mid-1970s. In summary, these developments are: continued deployment of the SS-9, SS-11 and SS-13; testing of the SS-9 with multiple re-entry vehicles; continued deployment of the POLARIS-type submarine; continued efforts to improve anti-submarine warfare capabilities; and continued testing of the improved ABM.

During 1969, the deployment of the SS-9 has continued at about the same rate as in 1967 and 1968. If this rate of deployment is continued, the USSR could have about 400 SS-9 operational launchers deployed by the mid-1970s.

The Soviets now have well over 1200 ICBM launchers completed or under construction. This includes the older SS-7s and SS-8s as well as the SS-13s, SS-11s, and SS-9s. All of these will be operational before mid-1971.

Three tests of the SS-9 with multiple re-entry vehicles have taken place since March. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] There is some difference of opinion in the intelligence community concerning the precise nature of these tests but all are agreed that the USSR has the capability to deploy hard target multiple independently-targeted re-entry vehicles by the mid-1970s.

At least eight or nine new Y-class POLARIS-type 16 tube ballistic missile submarines have already been launched and several are believed to be operational. Continued deployment at the current rate will allow the USSR to match the U. S. POLARIS fleet by the mid-1970s.

Testing of the improved Soviet ABM interceptor continues.

In short, we believe the USSR has the capability of acquiring, by the mid-1970s,

- . some 400 SS-9 ICBMs
- . multiple independently-targeted re-entry vehicles
- . SLBMs matching the U. S. POLARIS fleet
- . ICBM retargeting capability.

This capability would constitute a very grave threat to our MINUTEMAN forces and our bomber forces in the mid-1970s. As a consequence, the deterrent to nuclear warfare would be eroded seriously.

Although the potential Chinese ICBM threat has slipped somewhat, it is estimated that a first generation ICBM could reach Initial Operational Capability by 1972. By 1975 operational ICBM launchers might fall somewhere between 10 and 25. During the 1970s, China could develop a significant production program in thermonuclear weapons and associated delivery systems and, consequently, would represent a considerable threat to U. S. bases and allies in Asia, and a growing threat to the continental United States.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I would like to sum up for you my position with regard to the Soviet threat as it relates to the urgent need for approval of the [REDACTED] ABM proposal.

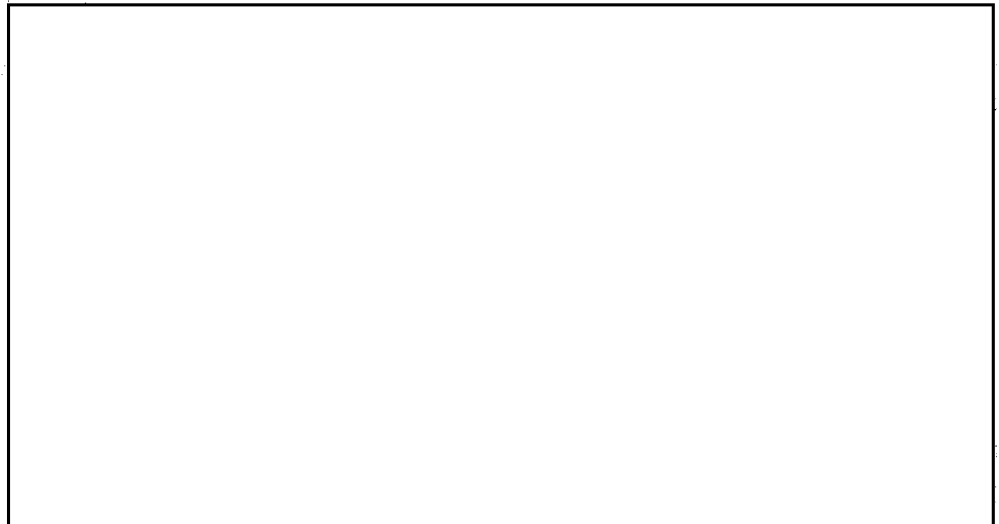
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As a Defense planner, as well as a Cabinet officer and a member of the National Security Council, I have a special role in the use of intelligence provided by the intelligence community. It is my responsibility to propose policies and plans which will fulfill the mission assigned to the Department of Defense, one aspect of which is to deter the Soviet Union from starting a nuclear war.

As a part of this responsibility, I must apply my own best judgment to the available intelligence to ensure that the President's policies and the mission of the Department of Defense are fulfilled. Consequently, I must consider not only what are the probabilities of future development and the state of current activities as expressed in the assessments of the intelligence community, but also the possibilities of future developments based on available current information.

That is why in my testimony before the Congress and in my public comments I have stressed the possible capabilities of the Soviet Union for the future in terms of relative strategic power. My discussion of Soviet capabilities has been derived by projecting to future years their demonstrated capabilities for production and deployment of strategic weapons and by making allowances for the rate of technological achievement.

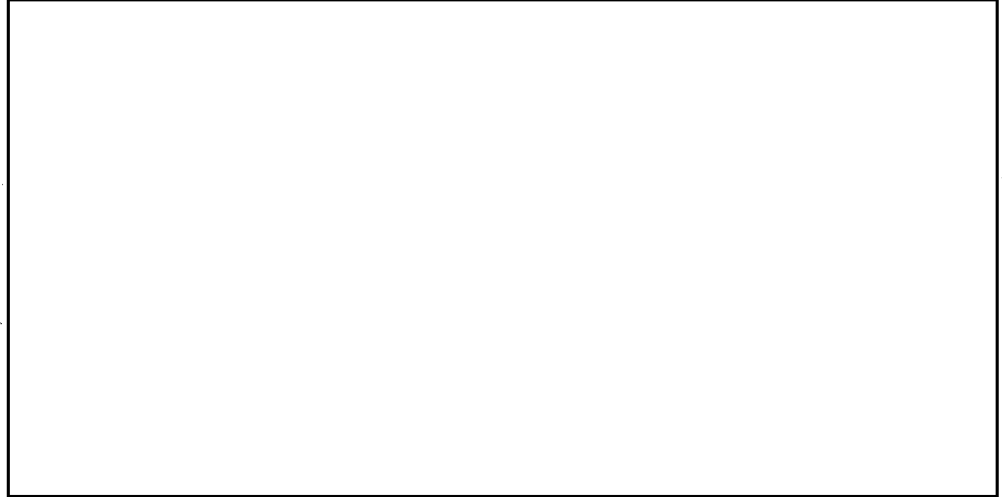
It is my carefully considered judgment, in which all of my principal military and civilian advisors agree, that the Soviet Union could achieve, or reach a position where they believe they have achieved, a capability to gravely weaken our deterrent by the mid-1970s -- if we do nothing now to offset it. This judgment is based upon the following conclusions:



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In summary, Mr. Chairman, it is entirely possible that the Soviet Union could achieve by the mid-1970s a capability to reduce, in a surprise attack, our surviving strategic offensive forces below the minimum level required for "Assured Destruction," and thus gravely weaken our deterrent. In my judgment, the overall strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union is much too close to run that risk. Therefore, something more must be done now to ensure a favorable strategic balance in the mid-1970s and beyond.

Short of achieving a workable agreement with the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic armaments, which will take some time, we are convinced that the approval of Phase I of [redacted] would be the most prudent and economical course we could pursue at this particular juncture. This action would place us in a position to move forward promptly not only with the defense of our MINUTEMAN and bomber forces should the Soviet threat develop as I have described, but also with the defense of our population against the Chinese ICBM threat should that emerge during the next few years. STAT

In your letter of July 3rd, you also asked whether the Director of Central Intelligence, Richard Helms, concurs in my formulation of the threat. I have furnished a copy of this letter to Director Helms and he assures me that he has no disagreement with the statements concerning the potential Soviet and Chinese Communist strategic capabilities, as seen from the intelligence point of view.

Sincerely,

/s/

.Encl.

Mel Laird

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

8 July 1969

The Honorable John Stennis  
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In your letter of 3 July 1969 to Mr. Helms, you requested that he consult with Secretary Laird on Secretary Laird's response to your inquiry concerning the strategic threat to the United States.

Although Mr. Helms is presently out of town, he has read the text of Secretary Laird's reply. Mr. Helms wishes to assure you that he has no disagreement with the statements in Secretary Laird's letter to you of 8 July concerning the potential Soviet and Chinese Communist strategic capabilities, as seen from the intelligence point of view.

Sincerely,



R. E. Cushman, Jr.  
Lieutenant General, USMC  
Acting Director

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

1 July 1969

Honorable J. W. Fulbright  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In reviewing the transcript of my testimony before your Committee on June 23, 1969, two matters appeared to me to be particularly troublesome from the standpoint of the publication of an unclassified version. The first concerns the wholesale deletion of Mr. Helms's testimony. While I completely agree with the necessity for this action, it does leave the public record incomplete. Since the major purpose of this hearing was to explore whether any differences existed between Mr. Helms and myself or between Department of Defense positions and those taken by the Intelligence Community, it should be obvious that the deletion of Mr. Helms's testimony from the public version creates certain grave obstacles to a balanced understanding of what transpired. Accordingly, the reader of this record should be forewarned that no conclusions, one way or the other, should be drawn from the printed testimony with regard to the position taken by Mr. Helms on any particular aspect of the intelligence estimates.

STAT The second matter involves, essentially, a problem of semantics. The transcript reflects considerable confusion over such terms as "1st strike weapon," "1st strike capability," and "1st strike intentions." Notwithstanding several hours of intense discussion of these terms before your Committee, I fear that a mutual understanding of their meaning still eludes us. This is particularly unfortunate because it is essential that both the Congress and the public understand the character of the threat which led to the President's [ ] proposal. Therefore, I would like to restate the issue in terms that avoid the semantic difficulties which apparently trouble some of the members of your Committee when 1st strike terminology is used.

As you well know, the strategic nuclear war policy of the United States since the end of World War II has been firmly based on the concept of deterrence. To achieve deterrence we must have what my predecessor Robert McNamara called an "Assured Destruction" capability. He defined this term in his Last Posture Statement as follows: ". . . an ability to inflict at all times and under all foreseeable conditions an unacceptable degree of damage upon any single aggressor, or combination of aggressors -- even after absorbing a surprise attack." He went on to say, "One can add many refinements to this basic concept, but the fundamental principle involved is simply this: it is the clear and present ability to destroy the attacker as a viable 20th Century nation and an unwavering will to use these forces in retaliation to a nuclear attack upon ourselves or our allies that provides the deterrent. . ."

Thus the question that presents itself is whether the Soviet Union could achieve by the mid-1970s a sufficient capability, in a surprise attack, to reduce our surviving strategic offensive forces below that critical minimum level required for Assured Destruction. This, Mr. Chairman, is the crucial issue, because if the Soviets should achieve such a capability, or believe they have achieved such a capability, our deterrent would be lost and the chances of a global nuclear war greatly increased.

It is my carefully considered judgment, in which all of my principal military and civilian advisors agree, that the Soviet Union could achieve such a capability, or reach a position where they believe they have achieved such a capability, by the mid-1970s -- if we do nothing now to offset it. This judgment is based upon the following conclusions:

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In summary, Mr. Chairman, it is entirely possible that the Soviet Union could achieve by the mid-1970s a capability to reduce, in a surprise attack, our surviving strategic offensive forces below the minimum level required for "Assured Destruction," and thus gravely weaken our deterrent. In my judgment, the overall strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union is much too close to run that risk. Therefore, something more must be done now to ensure a favorable strategic balance in the mid-1970s and beyond.

Short of achieving a workable agreement with the Soviet Union on the limitation of strategic armaments, which at best will take some time, we are convinced that the deployment of Phase I of  would be the most prudent and economical course we could pursue at this particular juncture. This action would place us in a position to move forward promptly not only with the defense of our MINUTEMAN and bomber forces should the Soviet threat

STAT

develop as I have described, but also with the defense of our population against the Chinese ICBM threat should that emerge during the next few years.

Mr. Chairman, I believe you will agree that this letter should be made part of the public record and inserted before Director Helms's prepared statement, the text of which cannot, of course, be published.

Sincerely,

/s/

MEL LAIRD



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27 June 1969

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

**SUBJECT: President's Comment to Senator Henry M. Jackson  
re Agency Performance**

During a conversation with Senator Henry M. Jackson today, the Senator said he had gotten my message that I wanted to see him and was sorry he hadn't had time to get together. I said there were some intelligence developments he should know of but that we had kept Dorothy Foadick, of his staff, advised of these. In addition, I said that the Director wanted me to be sure that Senator Jackson understood that during all of our recent involvements on the Hill we had scrupulously provided exactly the same briefing in each of our appearances and carefully stuck to the facts. Senator Jackson said he was sure this was the case, but nevertheless appreciated the Director's message. He said in fact that just last Monday (23 June) he had a talk with the President during which the President said in effect "don't you think Dick Helms is doing a good job?" to which Senator Jackson responded "absolutely--he is a real pro."

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**JOHN M. MAURY**  
Legislative Counsel

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2 July 1969

The Honorable Glenard P. Lipscomb  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C. 20515

My dear Mr. Lipscomb:

Jack Maury has just told me the sad news of the recent death of your father. In the absence of the Director, and on his behalf, I want to extend the sincere sympathy of all of your friends in the Agency.

Sincerely,

/s/

R. E. Cushman, Jr.  
Lieutenant General, USMC  
Acting Director

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